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THE MAKING OF LITTLE "DEMOCRATS"

By FRANK CHODOROV

IN YOUR TIME — when you had arrived at the ripe old age of twelve — children must have been made of poor stuff. Or so you think after reading the "guide for teachers" recently put out by the Board of Education of the City of New York; it's called *SOCIAL STUDIES — Grades 7, 8, 9.*

Surely, you say to yourself, the modern shaver is superior because, according to the book, nowadays "adolescents are deeply concerned with the more important aspects of life and society". You remember that as an adolescent you were deeply concerned with some things, but they were not "the more important aspects of life and society"; your marks might have weighed heavily on your mind, but more likely it was your batting average. You can't recall suffering from "social awareness", or from "constructive thinking" — which is the presumption of this course in Social Studies — and it follows, therefore, that you were second rate, in comparison with the modern youngster.

If memory serves you right, the teachers expected nothing more of you than that you learn something, on the theory that you were somewhat deficient in knowledge at the age of twelve. You were taught history, geography and civics — the three subjects that have been replaced in the modern curriculum by Social Studies — so that you might know something about history, geography and civics. You were not expected to "weigh evidence" nor to have acquired "the habit of critical judgment".

But, everything moves faster these days, including, apparently, the ripening of the human mind. Now it is possible — so this guide says — to eliminate "narrow subject matter divisions" and to rush these prodigies into "the study of meaningful problems in social studies". Instead of giving them the elements of civics to learn, you must hit them with such topics as "housing, inflation, consumer needs, social insurance, labor, industrial organizations and community planning"; or the "steadily enlarging concepts of world interdependence".

If you wonder at this jet-propulsion of kids into maturity, it is because you do not understand the modern theory of education. In your day it was assumed that you went to school for the sole purpose of getting hold of some factual material that would stand

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you in good stead when you tackled the problems of life. You were looked upon as an individual, not an accident in a social or age group, and the function of education was to bring out whatever potential you were endowed with by nature. Education was for the individual, not for an amorphous mass.

Today, however, the purpose of education is "to serve the needs of democratic society". The Social Studies curriculum "is designed to further the pupil's acceptance of his role as a participant in democratic society". As for "basic knowledges and skills", these are essential only "to effective participation in civic life". And so, the function of the school today is not to put the pupil in the way of acquiring knowledge and cultivating personal talents, for his own purposes, but to prepare him "for the greater contribution to the well-being of the group".

AMONG THE "specific objectives" of this course in Social Studies is one called "habits and attitudes". You read this section carefully, because it occurs to you that this objective is the crux of the matter.

There is nothing new — except the free use of the word — about "attitudes". You had your share when you were a youngster, and you still have them, though you have given them the more prosaic name of opinions, or viewpoints. For instance, you were a staunch Republican. How did you, in your nonage, get that "attitude"? From your father, as good a source of "attitudes" as you had found up to that time.

There was a Civil War veteran in your neighborhood who fired you with stories of battles and personal experiences; it never occurred to you to question the intellectual integrity of so companionable a fellow, and so his "attitude" regarding the South became yours. Your "attitude" toward Russia was fixed by a teacher who told about the Czar dragging young fellows from their homes to throw them into his conscript army.

In children of twelve, all "attitudes" are necessarily borrowed. It is ridiculous to expect them to have developed an independent frame of reference by which to judge experiences. The child knows his inadequacy, even if his teacher does not, and whenever he is called upon to make a value judgment he instinctively puts the matter up to an elder. His "attitude" will therefore reflect the "attitude" of the elder — parent or teacher — who has won his confidence. There is nothing else he can do.

Hence, in this course of Social Studies, in which current affairs of a controversial character are introduced, the "attitude" of the teacher is likely to become the "attitude" of the child. This fact the guide for teachers recognizes; it admits that absolute impartiality is not possible. It solves the difficulty by admonishing the teacher to be as fair as possible,

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and to select "research" material for the pupils in which various views are presented. Yet, the consciousness of immaturity, plus the desire to please the teacher, makes the latter's "attitude" easy to accept. That is to say, the Social Studies course must tend to become — in the treatment of current affairs — an out-and-out indoctrination course. That is all it can be.

Housing is listed as a subject to be dealt with in the classroom. Suppose some child (whose father — *Gott behut* — reads HUMAN EVENTS) should venture the opinion that subsidized housing is a form of charity. How would the teacher react? (Especially if she herself is getting a rent subsidy.) Obviously, she must take the position that the government has a right and a duty to take from those who have more to give to those who have less. Thus, even if she never heard of socialism, she becomes of necessity a carrier of the socialistic "attitude".

Can a teacher — in a public school — point out that social security is a fraud? Would she dare to select for "research" reading — even if she had a mind to — literature which points out that social security taxes are all spent by the government, and that the payments to the aged are derived from new taxes? (Could she hold her job if she did?) Can she explain to the children that inflation is caused by legal counterfeiting? Can she, a union member, stress the compulsory character of union membership?

The "attitude" transmitted by the teacher to the pupils must necessarily be the popular one, or the one most pleasing to the authorities. A teacher in a tax-supported institution could peddle no other.

SINCE, IN THE nature of things, the adolescent or pre-adolescent mind is not equipped for independent judgment, and is therefore most susceptible to the values presented to it, his education in subjects involving values (not facts) must be indoctrination. It was so in your time too. The only question then is, what kind of doctrine is being poured into modern boys and girls via this course in Social Studies?

To answer that question properly, one should be apprised of the doctrines that were poured into the teacher's mind during her formative years, not excluding the years she spent in college. That presents no difficulty. If the teacher is under forty, and did not have the benefit of a counteracting home or outside influence, the values she imbibed were collectivistic. Individualism was a dead letter all during the time she was making up her mind about things, and if she did run across it she found it smeared with opprobrium. In teaching Social Studies this acquired socialistic pattern of thought must find ample expression.

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This background inclination will find plenty of support in the "guide for teachers". The book simply reeks with the socialistic notion that the individual is of consequence only as a member of his environment group. The modern school, declares the guide, is the "agency of democracy". Hence, stress must be placed on such techniques as "committee organization", "democratic participation", "group cooperation", "pooling", etc. The individual learns nothing by and for himself. And all these social activities, it must be remembered, are conducted under the teacher's supervision, not left to the individual initiative of the youngsters — as in your day, when ruthless competition ruled in your spontaneous and unregimented group affairs.

Some of the topics suggested for study indicate the ideological bias of Social Studies. "What are my rights and responsibilities as a citizen?" "How has the national government attempted to reform 'big business'?" "How is the United States attempting to strengthen peace and democracy in the world?" "How can the UN contribute to a better world?" "How can relations with Latin American countries be strengthened?" "What are the possibilities for the future development of Africa?" "How have labor unions contributed to American democracy?" Almost every suggested topic — there are scores — indicates a leaning toward government intervention in both domestic life and the affairs of foreign peoples. The children seem to be well-insulated against individualism.

THE CLUE TO THE character of Social Studies is the wild and wooly use of the term "democracy" and its derivatives. It pops up with nauseating regularity, like an advertising slogan. And yet, never is it used in its historic meaning, as a form of government in which the citizens take direct part in all political decisions. Rather, as used in this book, the word is a synonym for egalitarianism.

"Every period in American history has made its contribution to the growth of democracy." This is simply not true, unless the word describes a social order in which the highest ideal is uniform mediocrity, achieved by force, if necessary. It is true that since the Jackson regime the tendency of American government has been to humor the leveling passion of the masses; but its price for every concession has been a further increase in power, toward the end that political democracy has been put off further and further; the bridge between the citizen and his government has constantly been lengthened.

Despite this drive toward leveling, the ideal that was always held high for the American youngster, until Social Studies, was that though he was as good as every other American, he could be a little better. This being a little better, a little more self-sufficient, a little more of a person is definitely frowned upon by those who formulated this course, and is certainly not encompassed in their use of the word "democracy".

Summing up, the word "democracy" is, as used in this guide, a euphemism for socialism. And the little "democrats" turned out of these classes, if the teaching sticks, should have a receptive "attitude" toward a socialistic regime.

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HUMAN EVENTS

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Christmas Card: "It is mid-December and every morning we see a huge, orange-red sunrise in the deep southeast over fields pale with dead grass and whiter still with frost. The wild animals are on the go, and all kinds of tracks pattern the farm roads whenever a thin snow falls in the immensity of night.

"In the houses garlanded and bulwarked with branches of fir balsams, all, God be praised, is well. There is a Christmas tree at every neighbor's, for there are many children on our road — rugged, good-tempered, little state-of-Maine bears bundled in heavy wools and earlaps. There are blessed smells of mince pies cooking, and somewhere the chattering household sound of an egg beater. Neighbors drop in to call, hanging their heavy winter coats on a kitchen peg, and everybody relaxes.

"The sun will retrace his burning path. The grass will spring green again from pale fields. There is still courage, decency and compassion in the world, and always will be. God builds on Nature, and we know this and are not afraid.

"What the season brings us is not that commercial traveller, Santa Claus, but the ancient scene of the manger and the star and the beautiful mother and the child. In a few days the feast will be here, and all the old fishermen of our coast say we will have snow."

Our contributor, Henry Beston, writes for us and our readers the above Christmas greetings from Nobleboro, Maine.

Mea Culpa: We now wish to atone for our fault of last spring, when we summarily dismissed Judge McGranery to permanent and outer darkness. At that time, the Judge had just been named Attorney General by the ineffable Truman to succeed the ineffable McGrath. He had been opposed by upright Democrats from Philadelphia, because of a shabby record. We thought at that time he would prove another Tydings with inexhaustible resources of whitewash.

But, lo, in recent weeks Attorney General McGranery has acted firmly and justly in the matters of Communism and corruption. "There is still courage in the world", as noted in Henry Beston's Christmas card. His department has presented indictments, called grand juries, proceeded against the hitherto well-protected party faithfuls. As we go to press, he has announced the indictment of Professor Owen Lattimore whose cause the Administration so long and loudly defended. Nor was all this simply a post-election maneuver. We are assured by impartial sources that McGranery could not have moved before now on many of these cases, because preparation of briefs and evidence required many months' work.

Unlike his chief in the White House, McGranery seems likely to go out of office in January attended by a blaze of glory. Whether the defeated hierarchy of the Democratic Party will recognize the political value of such a man as a leader to reform its ranks remains to be seen.

New Probe: Up on Capitol Hill, as the Christmas decorations mingle with the carpentry for the inaugural stands, there is talk of a new and exciting investigation. Ever since the Internal Security Committee brought to light the infiltration of Communists in schools and colleges, there has arisen a demand that this probe of our educational system should be widened.

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There is no disposition to minimize the appalling revelations of ex-Communist Bella Dodd (before the Internal Security Committee) and similar testimony about the Red menace in colleges. But, it is felt, an investigation should be launched in the new Congress which will seek to bring forcibly before the people the widespread indoctrination of students by teachers who are not Communists but who are simply collectivists.

Millions of ordinary citizens who have been vaguely disturbed at the kind of instruction their children have been receiving in public schools and colleges would be greatly enlightened if a body of the Congress showed by chapter and verse the socialistic philosophy which now pervades the teaching profession. The researches of Mr. William F. Buckley, Jr., as brought out in his best-selling volume *God and Man at Yale* would provide valuable leads to textbook "poison centers"; and the piece by our Associate Editor, Frank Chodorov, in this issue of HUMAN EVENTS, would serve as striking evidence.

There must be — as Professor E. Merrill Root recently suggested in these pages — many sound professors in various colleges who could be summoned to give their views; and many unsound ones whose views — brought out by expert questioning — would shock and arouse the people.

And on Capitol Hill, there is discussion of just which legislator could well conduct such an inquiry. One name brings much approval: Senator Karl Mundt of South Dakota, a former teacher himself, who is well-informed on the subject.

Coudert Amendment: The *New York Daily News* hails the amendment to reform the so-called electoral college as sure to become the "law of the land"; and the Scripps-Howard paper in Washington says it should have a "high priority" of consideration in the coming Congress.

It is noticeable that few of the papers endorsing this measure (described last week in HUMAN EVENTS in an article by J. Harvie Williams) really highlight its most important aspect. Actually, as Mr. Williams made clear, it would reduce the power of the big-city states in general elections, for example in New York. It would, as Mr. Williams says, prove a truly revolutionary amendment.

Because it would, we doubt that its passage is as certain as the *New York Daily News* assumes. The resourceful leftists — who have waxed strong and insolent through their power in New York City and other industrial areas — will surely oppose it to the last, probably creating some impressively named organization to fight it. We shall be surprised if the Coudert amendment enjoys clear sailing.

(The Caxton Press, Caldwell, Idaho, has announced publication for February 2, 1953, of *The American Electoral College*, by Roger Lea McBride, a slim volume in which — we hear — the author surveys the various plans for reform and shows his preference for that of Representative Coudert.)

Dewey Pattern: From high Democratic quarters, we get the following analysis of the emerging pattern of the incoming Eisenhower Administration. As Democrats see it, the new set-up in the Executive branch will be dominated by friends and supporters of Governor Dewey. The appointment of Mr. Herbert Brownell to the post of Attorney General spells out a word which has great meaning to the outgoing leaders of a twenty-year old regime — patronage. Throughout the country — say the Democrats — Brownell will create through federal law appointees, a powerful machine, riding rough-shod over any local GOP leaders who have or have had links with the recent movement to nominate Senator Taft. The fact that Brownell accompanied Eisenhower is regarded as significant. He wished to lose no time in fixing the appointments which Ike has apparently decided to make as soon as possible.

These high Democrats who see the picture as above think that the ultimate objective is "Dewey in '56". They believe that by that year, Eisenhower (at the age of 66) will wish to retire rather than run for re-election. They point out that few Presidents in the past have cared to run for office at that age. These Democrats believe (and no doubt the wish is related to the thought) that the Dewey-Taft struggle will cause the Eisenhower regime much trouble. But they concede that the Dewey dominance may ere long begin to irk the new President. No Chief Executive likes to be the obvious prisoner of one faction

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of his party. At that moment, it is suggested, Taft might with some diplomacy undermine the Dewey hegemony.

However, if Ike produces a successful solution to the Korean problem, with the return of many American boys to the U.S., the Presidential prestige would be high — and internecine party trouble would remain in abeyance. But, if he fails to do so, a rising tide of popular discontent would be accompanied by intra-party commotion. It is recalled that last September 1st, when Ike was "running like a dry creek", the Ike high command had to make its peace with Taft in order to save the campaign. Some similar development before next Spring — according to this Democratic view — could not then be excluded.

Xmas in Germany: Our young men facing death or grim capture in Korea may feel some sympathy for German youth. Germany must "take the risk of having her soldiers treated as outlaws if captured by Russia in the event of war and if West German Army contingents form a part of the European and NATO armies", according to a dispatch from Karl von Weigand of the Hearst Newspapers. Legal experts believe that "captured German soldiers could be hanged or shot by Russia as outlaws for taking up arms in violation of the armistice stipulation", says von Weigand. For Russia regards the Potsdam agreement, entered into by Truman and Stalin in 1945 after Germany collapsed, as still in force. This is the secret worry that broods over a Germany now preparing to vote on rearmament against the Russian threat. But, "so delicate, so thorny, so uncertain is this question", says the Hearst correspondent, "that little has been said about it either in Germany, England, France and the United States."

The Over-Production Mess: We have it on the authority of the *Wall Street Journal* that the wholesale price index slipped last week to its lowest reading in two years. Commodity prices have taken a particularly bad licking.

Department stores are hoping that last minute Christmas buying will boost their sales to some semblance of parity with last year's. Advertising men report that appropriations for next year will be bigger than ever, which means that everybody will be in a free-for-all for the vanishing sales' dollar.

Everybody agrees that the nation's production powers exceed its consumption powers. Nature is in cahoots with our inventive genius in a nefarious plot to flood us with goodies. We suffer from satiation.

Whether that is so or not, the mere thinking that it is so is dangerous. In the past that line of thinking has led to such policies as printing and passing out more money to increase purchasing power (Roosevelt's raising of the price of gold); to giving foreigners money so that they could "buy" our surpluses; to engaging in expensive military ventures; to plowing back into the earth little pigs and big bales of cotton.

Did you ever have too much? Did anybody? It will indeed be a millenium when milady has too many pairs of stockings, a bookworm too many books, a drinker too much whiskey. Over-production is something that delights economists because it gives them something to write books about, but we ain't never seen it. We, at any rate, don't have enough.

We haven't the space to write a full refutation of the over-production gibberish. We have just enough space to suggest a remedy for the disparity between production and consumption. Suppose we had sense enough to abolish the income tax. That would increase the purchasing power of every citizen — on the average — about twenty per cent. The mountain of production we fear would vanish overnight.

But that, in the words of the best textbooks on economics, is an over-simplification.

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Citizens of the World, by Stringfellow Barr. New York: Doubleday and Company. $3.00. Reviewed by William Henry Chamberlin.

Said a befuddled guest at a royal ball to the Duke of Wellington, resplendent in uniform with orders and medals: "Mr. Smith, I believe." "Sir," said the Duke, "if you believe that you will believe anything."

Stringfellow Barr is a professed believer in world government. And because he believes in this absurd delusion he finds himself almost forced to believe, angrily and dogmatically, a great many other things that just aren't so. His latest book, which carries further the mushy sentimental approach of his shorter *Let's Join the Human Race* is a storehouse of clichés that are inaccurate, of dogmatic judgments that do not stand up to reasoned analysis, of remedies that are irrelevant or that are worse than the ills they are supposed to cure.

The first blight on Mr. Barr's thinking processes is an almost pathological American guilt complex: we are largely to blame for the present unsatisfactory state of international relations. The principal theme of the book is that America owes the rest of the world, especially the economically backward areas, a living.

And the author's principal positive proposal is an International Development Authority, for which America is to put up most of the money, but which is to be under the control and direction of the United Nations. This is to be financed on an astronomical scale. The author mentions with approval the figure of fifty billion dollars which the well-meaning but naive late Senator MacMahon proposed that America should contribute to world reconstruction if the Soviet Union would accept limitation of armaments, and the still higher figure proposed by Walter Reuther.

Implied, although not expressly stated, is the fanciful theory that the Soviet Union would be so impressed by such a demonstration of American big-heartedness that it would beat its swords into ploughshares and everyone would live happily ever afterward. For this theory there is not a shred of evidence or probability.

Although the author repudiates sympathy with Communism it will be surprising if his book is not cited in a *Pravda* anti-American tirade. For the book fairly drips with internationalist do-gooder contempt for any attempt, however feeble, to assert American national interest in a world where nationalism still rules supreme. When we got tired of having Communists infiltrate UNRRA and tell Czechs and Poles and Yugoslavs that American food and clothing were coming from Russia, when we decided to take future relief operations into our own hands — we were "seceding from the human race", according to Mr. Barr.

Communism, in Mr. Barr's judgment, has a copyright on peace and justice and offers "bread and freedom" to "starving millions" of Asia about whom he moans and beats his breast. He never stops to explain when and how Communism ever brought either to any people under its control.

It is not surprising to find in this book that hoary old chestnut which becomes no truer from thoughtless repetition; that you can't fight Communism (except by gigantic boondoggling giveaway operations), because it is an "idea" or, as Mr. Barr puts it, "a system of ideas and a prescription for the actual ills of mankind". The truth is that Communism as an abstract idea would be of little concern to Americans, whereas Communism as the armed doctrine of a vast slave empire is a very real threat to American security.

Mr. Barr has obtained an appropriate sponsor for his book of unreal panaceas. One might have guessed that the preface would be written, as it is, by Justice William O. Douglas.

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